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NSC BRIEFING

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DATE: **12-28-79** **SINO-INDIAN BORDER DISPUTE**

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I. India and Communist China still at loggerheads, despite apparent desire of both sides for negotiations.

A. No border clashes have occurred since skirmish in Ladakh area on 21 October, but further incidents possible at any time.

II.

1. Such concern is indicated by

talks between Chinese

and Indian Communist leaders last month.

III.

A. Official and public attitudes in India have hardened considerably since 21 October clash.

B. New Delhi apparently decided last week on a policy of countering Peiping's moves along the frontier with a swift expansion of "Indian presence."

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1. Army reinforcements have been ordered to Tibetan frontier areas, despite concern over consequent reduction of military strength on West Pakistan border.
 - a. At least one army division is already being moved to Assam border region.
 - b. Additional units may be redeployed to other sectors.
 - C. Nehru last week (5 November) publicly re-emphasized his desire for peaceful solution, but did not rule out use of force to recover Chinese-held Indian territory.
 1. In its sharpest note to date to Peiping, New Delhi on 4 November demanded Chinese forces get out of Indian territory both in Assam and Ladakh.
- IV. Border issue has deepened long-standing split in Indian Communist Party, with policies of party leader Ghosh and other "moderates" opposed by extremists on both left and right.
- A. Pro-Chicom extremists (led by P. C. Joshi) feel "rightist" trend in India has already gone too far, and party's only hope lies in all-out support of Chicoms.
 - B. "India-firsters" (led by S. A. Dange) have openly supported Indian position on McMahon line--thereby probably reflecting majority view in party rank and file.
 - C. Party Secretary Ghosh, close follower of Moscow line who recently visited both Moscow and Peiping, has tried to avoid committing party to full support of either New Delhi's or Peiping's position.
 1. Latest flare-up of anti-Chinese sentiment in India, however, ~~has~~ brought Ghosh to move toward position of "nationalists" in party talks.

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D. Chances are good that meeting of party National Council, which opened yesterday in Meerut, will end in public display of party agreement under Ghosh.

1. party Central Executive session which ended in New Delhi on Monday--described as scene of serious factional fight--adopted "compromise" resolution accepting McMahon line, committing party to defense of India's "territorial integrity," but also calling for Ladakh settlement based on "administrative realities."
2. Whatever outcome of Meerut meeting, deep differences will remain.

V. Moscow continues to maintain official position of neutrality on border issues.

- A. Soviet media--after week's silence--merely reported both Indian and Chinese versions of Ladakh incident.
- B. Khrushchev on 7 November publicly reiterated his desire to "do everything" to end Sino-Indian tension.
1. Nehru is still banking on Moscow's influence with Peiping to soften Chinese stand.

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